

CG Docket NO. 05-231

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Recently in Chicago, there was a fire in the subway. The next day the local CBS affiliate held a news conference offering more detail on what happened and what lines/routes would be open. It was not captioned and as I live alone, there was no hearing person to help me. The phone lines were jammed, so my calls with my Captel phone could not go through. I cancelled a trip to my office at the University because I would have had to use that line. (I'm a college professor.)

It is simply unbelievable and unforgivable that the FCC, whom I support with my tax dollars, is going to put thousands of people in jeopardy with this ruling. It is particularly inconceivable in view of recent terrorist activity that the FCC would even consider weakening the policy, rather than strengthening it. Every Federal Agency should have representatives from all segments of the population, including the disabled population. Do you? Perhaps at your next meeting, wear ear stoppers and watch the tapes of 911 from your Washington affiliates without captions. It might give you a feel for what the deaf/impaired population faces every day.

I read in horror of how many disabled people died in Katrina. If there were a tornado in Chicago (and it has happened), would I have access to information that could save my life? Apparently, the FCC does not feel it necessary. I shall never forget that after 911, I knew more about what streets/businesses were open/closed in New York than I did in Chicago. The local Fox affiliate which had the same feed as the national affiliate ran the entire 911 coverage uncaptioned. The national feed was captioned, but of course, it did not cover the impact of 911 on Chicago and the traffic around the Sears Tower and the Hancock building.

The reality is, as the President keeps reminding us, we are fighting a war. We are also at the mercy of a changing and sometimes violent weather pattern. Information saves lives, reduces panic and yet you wish to provide a loophole that will limit accessibility of this information.

Closed captioning gives me many more details, nearly equal to what is audible. While visual information is welcome via other methods, such as crawls, signs, and graphics, the information that they convey is limited, and this can endanger my life, health, and safety, and property during an emergency. My survival needs are equally important to those of others in the community.

I support TDI's request that the FCC withdraw its August 7, 2006 clarification notice, and continue to maintain its effective enforcement of its current 79.2 regulations on emergency information broadcasts. Human lives are precious, and access to safety information is a vital American right!

Sincerely,

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